



General Topics :: Is 'accountability' scriptural?

Is 'accountability' scriptural?, on: 2008/2/15 16:00

This question occurred to me today, because it seems to have been taken on trust by the modern church, as if it *is* a biblical concept.

Well, I'm not suggesting it's not a biblical concept.... because Ephesians 5: 20 and 21 come to mind.

But, is this what anyone is thinking of, when they think of holding *themselves* accountable - that is: 'in the fear of God'?

Is there any difference at all between the accountability of an elder before God, and the accountability of a sheep in his flock?

If so, how is that difference to be measured?

And by whom?

Re: Is 'accountability' scriptural? - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/2/15 17:10

I don't know if it's biblical per se, I'm not wise enough and haven't prayed specifically about this yet. But, I do believe it's using wisdom. It's certainly not *unscriptural*. Sin and temptation abounds in the world and having someone we can talk to, be accountable to, is a great help. Satan knows our weaknesses and how to use them. If he can get to King David when he was alone, we're also susceptible.

We're fighting spiritual battles, not fleshly ones.

Ephesians 6:12-13 *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

And now, here comes the cavalry! *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

See the "that ye may be able to withstand" part? We already know that temptations will come but we also know that it's possible not to be able to stand when faced with them. See the "having done all" part? I believe all includes confiding in and leaning on the help of our brothers and sisters during these times.

Hebrews 10:19-26 sums it up.

19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and having a High Priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, **25** not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. **26** For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,"

I love these scriptures! It lays it all out:

It says we should do everything possible to make sure we've done all we can to not only avoid sin and temptation, but to keep each other strong in the faith. It also lays out the consequences if we willfully sin - "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,"

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Knowing this, and knowing that we're instructed to do all we can to prevent ourselves from sinning, how can we not utilize accountability? It's part of "having done all."

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/2/15 17:15

Quote:

-----Keith said:

"I don't know if it's biblical per se,"

To clarify, I believe accountability is biblical, but I don't know if it's "required" specifically.

As Hebrews says, we should "do all" and I believe accountability falls under that instruction.

Re: Is 'accountability' scriptural?, on: 2008/2/16 19:57

SimpleLiving said

Quote:

-----I don't know if it's biblical per se

I'm really glad you said that, because I've been struggling to find words to express the question mark I have inside. I think I may mean... is 'accountability' as a *modern* term, just another - perhaps slightly more spiritual-sounding than the concept of business modelling which churches have been taking on - bit of *worldly thinking*, (for want of a better phrase)?

To explain.... slowly, as God has been answering a question I asked Him around three years ago 'What is the gospel?' He has been leading me through a variety of considerations. One of those is the matter of how does a preacher know that his listeners are hearing him?

Another is, how does he know whether they have honestly responded to/transacted with God, as a result?

Although the specific answers are different, the common factor is that he will perceive changes in answer to both questions.

This (somehow) led on to the whole business of people who are unchanged, going to church at all - when 'church' attendance, is supposed to be part of their *testimony* of a living relationship with God.

In fact, one could easily contend that if a person has not changed at all, then his non-response to the gospel disqualifies him from church attendance. (Isn't this what hypocrisy is about - going to church but not obeying God in personal things?) But, if he *has* been challenged to seek God in an active way, then he has broken through the pain barrier of pride, may have repented, ceased from sin, and been filled with the Holy Spirit, of which previously he was none of those things.

Thus.... churches should be full of people with a living relationship with their Father in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom else need they be 'accountable', if they have understood that 'all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do' (Heb 4)?

So... is 'accountability' as it is practised amongst and between mere men, really scriptural, or is it another variety of veritable *psychobabble* which some are otherwise quite quick to condemn?

Please don't misread the above thesis as my certified *opinion*.

Just reasoning with myself.... that's all.

Re: - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2008/2/16 23:24

Oh, yes, we are definitely accountable as disciples and followers and servants of Christ. The world is watching our deeds, our witness, our works. Do they glorify the God we serve and testify to the truth that our Lord is living, real, and true?? We are an epistle of Christ, His Word written in our hearts, and our lives should reflect His grace, His love, His mercy, and His truth!!

Re: Is 'accountability' scriptural?, on: 2008/2/17 19:30

Hia Sis Dorcas. Had to think long and hard on this while I was posting on the Watchman Nee thread.

Yes, I still love Nee.

Anyhow - I feel that because of my background, that I had to learn the hard way on accountability.

Pro 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a **friend**; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

FRIEND - key word.

I put myself to my friends to tell me when I'm off. I wait and watch who I feel has the best CHRISTLIKE spirit and ask them to tell me when I'm not seeing my own "blindspots" - which we ALL have BTW.

I don't choose them by their "doctrine" but by their "spirit".

I'm pentecostal - and you know the rest - but most of those who've I requested accountability or oversight from are either Baptist or Presbyterian and maybe just two that's more believing the wacky things I do. Both on here and in Church and in my private life.

Only one sister knows everything about my entire life and private life and we've known each other for over 20 years and she's a true Christ-like Saint and not like me. She's softer etc. etc..

Those are the batch of folks who I ask to please tell me when I'm going off. I have blind spots - and no one can make all the people happy, all of the time.

On here - I have folks looking in that are not members that are in the ministry - and then there's others. At Church, of course I have the elders that are Christlike - Praise GOD only.

Took me 28 years to find a Pastor since I left my home Church. Horrible looking around for that long for a Pastor with Love/Holiness in one package. He knows about my life and he's practically saved my life, in a sense.

I don't know if you'd call all of this accountability or Body Ministry or just being wise to yourself. If I can't be wise in every thing - at least I can be wise enough to know that I'm not. :-?

Thanks for letting me blabber on.

Re:, on: 2008/2/17 22:48

Following are two definitions of accountability. One from the Websters 1828 Dictinary, and one from the Websters Online Dictionary of 2008.

In 1828 it seems that the definition of accountability referred more to mans accountability to God because it also mentions judgment and reward. Christ is the the one that will judge us all. As believers, we are told not to judge fellow believers, because Christ is the one who judges all.

Websters 1828 Dictionary

ACCOUNTABIL'ITY, n.

1. The state of being liable to answer for one's conduct; liability to give account, and to receive reward or punishment for actions.

The awful idea of accountability.

2. Liability to the payment of money or of damages; responsibility for a trust.

Websters online Dictionary, 2008

accountability

Main Entry: acÂ·countÂ·abilÂ·iÂ·ty

Pronunciation: \ə-ˌkau̇n-tə-ˈbi-lə-tē\

Function: noun

Date: 1794

: the quality or state of being accountable; especially : an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account f or one's actions

Re: Is 'accountability' scriptural?, on: 2008/2/18 10:15

Hi waltern,

Thanks for that thought from the older dictionary.

'Websters 1828 Dictionary

ACCOUNTABIL'ITY, n.

1. The state of being liable to answer for one's conduct; liability to give account, and to receive reward or punishment for actions.

The awful idea of accountability.'

Can we base our theology on this?

If so, does the Bible agree with the *limitations* of the dictionary definition, or, does it go further?

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And if it goes *further*, in which direction does it go?

Picking up on the word 'awful', should we *fear* 'account'ing to God?

Re:, on: 2008/2/18 10:43

I think what is considered "accountability" among Christians today is not a bad thing, but the modern version of it that we see today has its roots in modern, humanistic psychology. We need to be leary of that side of it because humanistic psychology has replaced the Bible in modern churches today.

However, the NT has a lot to say about "submitting one to another", and how the church shared everything in the 1st century. This, of course, speaks to personal property and what not, but it is implied here that they lived among each other... sharing their lives together as well. I don't think it was like "I make you accountable to me", as many pastors seem to think... but more "I make myself accountable to you".

They also confessed their sins to each other, not as the wicked Catholic Church twists that passage so as to make a Catholic have to confess to a priest, but rather to keep each other humble. Knowing they all failed, but helping one another to grow beyond the failures.

I think organizations like Promise Keepers put too much emphasis on "accountability", making the person you're accountable to the Holy Spirit, if you understand what I mean. A believer becomes too dependant on their accountability partner and not dependant at all on the Holy Spirit. It's out of balance. And Promise Keepers should be avoided anyway... it's steeped in apostasy and ecumenism. Always has been. I noticed it when I used to attend... and at that point I didn't even know what apostasy and ecumenism was!

Anyway... just my 3 cents worth.

Krispy

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/2/18 11:08

Quote:
-----I think what is considered "accountability" among Christians today is not a bad thing, but the modern version of it that we see today has its roots in modern, humanistic psychology. We need to be leary of that side of it because humanistic psychology has replaced the Bible in modern churches today.

I think Krispy is right. The notion of accountability that some churches and Christian books are implementing these days can be more man-focused than God-focused. It can be like a therapeutic technique for self-help baptized in Christian lingo. We need to exercise wisdom and godly discernment when confessing the secrets of our hearts to men. If we are led by the Spirit, God will give us good sense on what is permissible to share with whom and what is not. Nothing in God is arbitrary, and this wholesale teaching we see in many contemporary Christian books of "just find an accountability partner and call him each week with a spiritual status report" seems to be not very prudent or savvy of God's ways. I remember being at a men's Bible study where a Steven Arterburn book was being taught, chapter by chapter. The brother leading the Bible study exhorted us men to team up with another person in the study, exchange phone numbers, and become instant "accountability partners", not even knowing each other.

It was careless instruction, if you ask me. Two drug addicts covenanting to tell each other the last time they shot up is not going to help them kick the habit; they need, instead, to seek the professional therapist who is free from their besetting affliction. In our case, of course, the Counselor is God...though He can designate human intercessors for us on a personal, secret level, but choosing this human intercessor is not an arbitrary thing. The person He designates to intercede is often a vessel hand-selected by Him, a person who is more mature and knows full well the blood of Christ alone is the only power able to effectually deal with the bondage. I say this because I've heard teachings that state the mere act of confession alone is sufficient for results.

Having a brother to come in agreement with prayer is one thing; having a designated person to divulge every secret that flashes across your heart is a wholly different thing. This, as Krispy pointed out, is not a Biblical concept, but one actually rooted in psychology and various forms of situational therapy employed by professionals on the humanist sector. If we look deep enough, we see the effectiveness of such a notion is based almost entirely on the fear of how others will perceive your failures. When you take away all the frosting, this is the deterring factor: "I am reluctant to do this action because I'll eventually have to tell so-and-so and this will hurt my image even more." The motivation to stop, therefore, can be born out of a fear of what others will think, rather than what God *already thinks*. And this is the subtle shift that swings the pendulum from Christian to human.

Brother Paul

Re: Accountability, on: 2008/2/18 11:53

I think we have all heard stories about believers that have shared their past or present problems with other believers, and then have it broadcast all over the Church.

I recently heard a true story of a man that went to his Pastor for advice and council in regards to his marriage. Instead of helping him, the Pastor immediately tried to break the couple up, and take the other man's wife for his own. It did not work, but the damage was done, exposing the Pastor as a man of the flesh, and not a man of God.

Over the years, we have all heard about these things. Back in the 1990's my son and I went to Promise Keepers. After the main promise keepers meetings were over, we met in our Church each week. The Pastor broke us up into groups. In one of the groups, a fellow brother admitted that he was having an affair with another woman. Within one week everyone in the Church knew of his affair, and his wife left him.

This has all been a lesson for me. I confide in my Lord and Savior in prayer. When I pray, I am somehow, supernaturally, in the Throne Room of Heaven when I pray and talk with Him. He is the one that gives me advice, and he is the one that forgives me when I sin and make mistakes. And He is my Shepherd, that I am accountable to, and that keeps me on His path.

Re: Is 'accountability' scriptural, on: 2008/2/20 12:17

Thank you, brethren who have replied here. I appreciate the thoughtful ways you've expanded the issues.

walthern said

Quote:
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Amen. I believe in years gone by, this was the firm belief of protestant believers in general, and all the more fervently to make a difference between biblical faith and the practices of Roman churches.

Tyndale emphasises in his New Testament, the fellowship we have *among ourselves*. I believe this only is where we may be safe and loved, and bold enough to confess our faults on to another for prayer and healing, without fear of ostracism.